SURYA-GITA

JAMES H. COUSINS

SURYA-GITA

BOOKS OF POETRY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Ben Madighan	1894
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Moulted Feathers	1919
The King's Wife (A Drama)	1919
Sea-Change	1920
Surya-Gita	1922

SURYA-GITA

(SUN SONGS)

TOGETHER WITH
SECOND EDITIONS OF
'THE GARLAND OF LIFE'
AND 'MOULTED FEATHERS'

BY

JAMES H. COUSINS

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THE GARLAND OF LIFE

First Edition 1917. Second Edition 1922

MOULTED FEATHERS

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SURYA-GITA

First Edition 1922

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THE GARLAND OF LIFE

First Edition 1917.
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DEDICATION

TO FRANCIS SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON

When with dark wrongs we waged our strife,
I found you pure, past praise or frown;
But in the blinding light of life
Saw not your hovering martyr-crown;
Nor dreamed that when in April showers
New life's green banners were unfurled,
You in the clash of iron powers
Should fall, and, falling, shake the world!

O friend! forgive these eyes that far
Held me from measure of your height;
Nor saw that in your war with war
You of your end had inward sight,
And heard round your vicarious head
God's thunders to the nations call:
"Life is not nourished on the dead:
Who take the sword, by sword shall fall!"

Oh! honour fawns about your feet;
For you, with but a breath to live,
Let not death's bitter mar life's sweet,
But stood as One who said, "Forgive,
Father; they know not what they do!"
Ere the reluctant rifles cried
(Nay, to new life saluted!) you
On their blind error smiled, and died.

Yea, and upon our shattering grief
You smile in knowledge deeper grown,
Saying, "You count my life a leaf
By some dark wind to darkness blown:
It is not so!" And there you leave
The fact, and to new labours go—
A soul one-purposeful, to weave
Love's garment for the stark world's woe.

Surely in that exalted place
Where lauding Seraphs round you press,
Some wistfulness will cross your face
Shadowed from our heart-loneliness.
Yea, you some hollowness will find
In their flame-blinded praise of Him;
Our strife in darkness call to mind,
And slip between the Cherubim

Crying, " I want no starry crown !
I want no harp save one that thrills
Marching the Hosts of Reason down
To war with Wrong between the hills !"

And somehow (though we know not how,
Or may not know the well-known face)
Someone will glimpse your placid brow,
And feel you strongly in your place ;—
You whom no power on earth had awed ;
Whose hand would heal where sharp it fell,
Smite error on the Throne of God,
And smile on Truth though found in Hell.

Therefore, O spirit ! in my book
I set your tragic honoured name
With songs on which you smiled to look,
Counting them kindred to the Flame ;
So that, when in some suffering land
You move as man or maid with men,
We two may know, clasp hand in hand,
And wage our Holy Wars again.

A HYMN TO THE SONG GODDESS

I

MOTHER of Song and Singers! Mother of me
No less than those made free
Of all thy realm of sea and earth and air,
Wherein, with feet in life set strongly fair,
With hands by noon or midnight splendours filled,
They, for thine image here, a godlike dwelling build :—
Mother of Singers! Mother of me no less,
Although these hands
Lift no sharp trumpet blown for warlike bands
To rise, to march, to press
Through flame and smoke
Beleaguered walls, or in the wilderness
Conjure from sterile sands
The loud and populous lands
Begotten of the deep :—

Mother of Song! thee I too shall invoke;
For though its cords know not the conqueror's
sweep,
Yet may my unadventuring harp,
Set on a grassy scarp
Midway between the sea, that question thrills,
And the high-answering hills,
Echo thy subtler music in a tone
Not all unknown
To some whose eyes have vision of the road
To thine occult abode.

II

Hellas knew thee by a name
Ninefold, sisterly, removed.
We, who glimpse the secret flame
Guarded in thy circling hands,
Know thee nearer, deeply proved
One in sunned or shaded lands;—
Eastward, where the heavens glow,
Lotus-throned Saraswati;
Westward (islanded in spray,
Where a swift melodious hour
Hath sweeter lure than wealth or power),

Brigid, Mother-mystery
Wrapped in Light that darkens day:
Three in name;—but one the Word
India, Greece and Ireland heard.
O thou, Bright Arrow from the unseen Bow!
Mystic daughter of the Light,
Bride of all-containing Night,
And of thy spouse the foe!
Thy barb is fixed in thy true lover's breast.
Thou woo'st him from the depths, yet on the crest
Thou slippest into silence, lest, in thee
Losing himself, thou lose a needed note
Out of the multitudinous throat
Of thy celestial harmony;
Or, while his lips thy salutation win,
He lose thy soul within.

III

Mother of Song and Singers! in hours replete
With joy, have we not cried with emptiness
Of the filled void, and longed and longed to press
Behind the flying music of thy feet

Through the heart's purple twilight, and the
gleam
Along the lanterned chambers of the brain,
Into the crystal centre of thy strain?
Yet, for our solace, we have caught, in
stream,
Thunder and bird-note and the murmur of
trees,
In bat's jarred string and bugles of the bees,
Thy passing music; for thou art not alone
In Love's loved voice the best-loved tone;
The lure from life, to Life more bountiful;
The harmony to lull
The clash of inharmonious time,
Unto which end man's ages slowly climb;—
But thou art also vocal in the spheres,
Moving to song too subtle for our ears.
Oh! there are chantings in the winds that
pass,
And poets hiding in each blade of grass;
For thou, God's eldest Voice that built the
whole,
Singest the choric world back to no less a
goal.
.. The black-browed storm strides loudly
from the south,

And flings himself full-length upon the pines
That he may shake from them a windy song
Giving him back his likeness. They from him
Learn a vast note against their singing-time;
And in his wake the happy flooded pools
Bubble faint wordings; while the bleating frogs
Chorus themselves to music past their range
In thirsty twilights, pushing out their joy
Songward. And these are thou, for thou hast set
Thine urgency in Earth's dim-uttering heart.
Thou spreadest thine insignia on the wave
Harp-strung with foam of tempest. Unto thee
Life strains through life; and in the soundless tomb,
Yea, in death's mould, thou hast epiphany
In the mute marriage hymn of dust to dust!

IV

Forgive me, Mother! the dear sin of praise,
Since thou thyself art Praise, and hast no need

For our poor quavering reed;
Yet I will raise
A hymn of thankfulness that through my
days
Thou didst, with song's bright sting,
Prick into agony my callow brain
With hungry questioning
And sweet creative pain.
What if it was not mine to lift star-clear
Thy face, ineffably unflawed,
Before a bending world, and hear
My harp-notes' echoed laud;
Or conjure down
Heaven's waters to the stain
Of our deep-sullied earth;
Yet unto me was given the gradual crown,
The slow unfolded gain
Of mine own heart,
Bringing song's greenth, refreshing after
dearth.
Mother of me! in quiet paths apart,
(Blazed through the midmost of the strife
For my land's freedom, and for full, free life
For mother, sister, wife,)
Thou led'st my feet past failing fire and fire,
And pale blown ashes that to sense belong,

Searching the shadows for a flying trace
Of thee, till came at last thy certain grace—
Song lit with life, and life made sweet with song.
.. And when the sun falls from life's haughty noon,
And underfoot a shadow slowly spreads
Eastward (grey prophet of approaching night),
Grant me, O Mother! no pale humbleness
Of lessening heat; no mild apology
For song in face of clamour that would claim
Itself all sound, deaf to thy still small voice
That shall consume all tumult. Grant me this:
To hold the spirit greater than the word;
Yet of the word to mould a worthy lip
For thy pure ministration through the earth.
.. Mother of Singers! O most purely pure!
How should we dare to name thy sacred name,
(We, dead of heart, crude-blooded, muddy-tongued),
But that, in exaltation, we have learned
Thine eye is less on deed than on desire?
Wherefore, O Mother! in the dusking time
I would outsing my morning; would eschew

(For what of praise Time's hand to me accords)
The chested strut of consequential rook
Loudly irrelevant. Yet, be it oblivion,
I shall have joy in memory of hours
Great in desire. Then wherefore should I make
The shrill complaint of seabirds in the dark?
Nay, but as shadows deepen I would play
The Spring's incorrigible optimist,
The hearty thrush that from a topmost twig
Whistles the sun to sleep, and his last note
Holds through a dream under a nested wing,
Eyes eastward that the first faint hint of dawn
Fail not of salutation. Even so I
Would play at seesaw with the ardent sun
Across the fulcrum of a flame-topped hill;
Rise as he falls, and, as he sinks from sight,
Catch glimpse of chaster glories hung aloft
Among the spreading leafage of the dark
Day-hidden, till at last I lift my head
Full in the bright companionship of stars,

Washed clear of stain in midnight's holy
flood
For life's new hazard here or otherwhere.

V

From song we come. Through song to song
we go.
Mother of Song and Singers! thou dost
house
All those who wear with joy upon their
brows
Keen thorns of aspiration. Through their
glow
Thou turn'st thy light to cleansing fire. The
woe
Of Beauty, that would clasp the world for
spouse,
They have, for urge thy lovers to arouse
To build more fair thy House of Life below.
More than accomplishment is on thy scrolls:
In thee desire and its fruition meet;
Yea, and for song the heart has mutely
willed
Thou hast a place, with those majestic souls
Who lay their utmost tribute at thy feet—
Silence magnificent with song fulfilled.

THE HIGHER STOICISM

HOW shall I sing of others' woe,
I who mine own have left unsung?
Through sorrowing strings ungainly go
My hands, and hold in leash my tongue.
I with such joy have lived so long
It stills the harp of mournful song.

Yet think not grief has passed me by.
I too have tasted life's unease;
Have known death's blank, and pain's low cry;
But, deeper than the depth of these,
Some glance of vision still has caught
Love's purpose through disaster wrought.

Not faith alone has edged the glance
That looks beyond life's growing pile,
And in destroying Shiva's Dance
Has glimpsed preserving Vishnu's smile.

Powers men deny, or darkly pray,
Have touched me in the full of day.

And though the Why and Whence be dark,
And questions Whitherward avail
No jot, I feel behind my barque
A homing wind is in the sail.
What fellow-travellers crowd the air
I know, and cast away despair.

I cannot hold it grievous doom
That Source and End are out of sight;
Rather give thanks that these have room
To pull us past our Ring of Night:
Twain-faced, but single-purposed both
To tease the soul from sensual sloth.

Wherefore it is not mine to raise
The chant of Passing and Revolt
With prophets of chill coming days
In which their birds of passion moult.
I give, for glooms in which they live,
The young-eyed Soul's affirmative.

They miss the forest-secret quite
Whose eyes are fixed on branch or bole.
They only read Fate's book aright

Who not in fragments seek the whole,
But feel the sap from life's deep root
Flow on to feed sky-hidden fruit.

Thought-free from every burning hour,
They sure may find cool space to fill
Their heart's deep urn from wells of power
Whose draught has grace to heal, and thrill
With gentleness their stoic hand
Who stand because they understand.

FLIGHT

Blue bird on the beechen bough!
Teach me how
I may spread my wings like you
In the blue;
For I think I too can fly
If I only try.
Why? you question, *Why*?
I shall tell you why.

Sometimes in the quiet night
Comes a light
In the middle of my head;
Then I spread
Arms to left and right wingwise,
Slowly, slowly rise
From the ground
Without a sound;
Hang a dizzy foot or so,
Then let go
And sail away

Like a flake of day
Blown across the wondering dark
Till my spark
Lengthens, flickers into tails,
Shakes and fails,
And I waken with a start
At my heart.

And as now in sunset rays
On you I gaze, and gaze, and gaze,
I begin to think
I feel the round world sink;
And I leave the ground, I rise
Through my dazzled eyes
To become a part of you,
Of the very jumping heart of you,
The fearless outward spring of you,
The spread glad wing of you.
Bird, O bird! that now
Leaves the beechen bough,
See me, see me panting at your side
Swimming down the swirling flashing sunset tide!

Alas!
In the whispering grass

I am spread
As one dead.
Overhead
You are but a torquoise gleam
Chuckling at my fallen dream.

Yet I seem
In my mind to find the print
Of a hint
Of a deep-infolded Power
That shall flower
Not alone to flight
At your cloudy height,
But along a singing way
Through and past the cage of clay;
Yea a Power that yet will spread
Rainbow wings of Godlihead,
When the inner has come out,
Routing Doubt;
Routing Doubt's twin-hearted wraith,
Blindman Faith;
When we leave control
With the Soul,
(Wisdom's goal,)
And have wrought with will unshaking
All our dreaming into waking.

A ONE-SIDED CONVERSATION WITH A FIELD-MOUSE

YOU pass me like a deeper shade
Of twilight, where I musing lie
In grass and hedge's mingling jade,
Then stop, and with a beady eye
Search me, till something in me stirs
To give you look for look, and see
Your secret, under spectral firs,
Faced by our mutual mystery.

Time was when in my childhood's days
It was a fearful thing to lie
In a wild creature's winkless gaze,
Dumb strangeness holding eye to eye;
But love and wisdom found the link
Slowly in vision's opened book:
Our thoughts are shadows of one Think,
Our eyes are fragments of one Look.

So, past these prisoning hands and feet,
Blent in the Spirit, equal, free,
Deep in one Being we may meet,
And touch a purer ecstasy
Than the loud storm of kindred blood
That strains to mingling, mad and blind,
Or the fantastic echoing flood
In shifting channels of the mind.
Yea, through far strangeness we may rest
In nearness that would miss our ken
Were I a mouse to claim your nest,
Or you a man who preyed on men!

Lo, now across our sundering grooves
There comes a power that shakes us free.
In you some prophet impulse moves,
Some hidden retrospect in me;
And where our pathways meet and merge,
We pierce the myth of earth and sky,
And mingle on the fluctuant verge
Where lives, in one vast Living, die.

That was a link of midnight snapped!
Now revelation, clearly terse,
Shows us as wild-heart creatures trapped

Within the shuttered universe.
Yet for our solace we may smile,
Since He who our immurement wrought
Pulls on Himself the sky's huge pile,
And fast in His own trap is caught;
And all those brazen-headed stars
Are nails that hold His wrestling Powers,
Nor shall He slip His prison bars
While you and I are held in ours;
For (mystery, of light assured
In times far off we both shall see,)
Himself with us He has immured:
We are not parts of Him, but He!
Yea He, the Lion of the World,
Shares here our hunger and our drought;
With us in life's vast net is curled,
And we must slowly gnaw Him out.
For this the wheels of being turn;
For this the seer and the mole
And you and I with ardours burn
Caught palely from the labouring Soul
That beats upon life's yielding gates,
And shreds the veil by midnight drawn,
And, confidently calm, awaits
The slow disclosure of the Dawn.

. . Meanwhile, good friend, we are agreed
That Life has music in her face,
To joy's fulfilment surely keyed,
And we are passing-notes in place;
And as these branches, lifted far,
Spurn not the clay from which they grew,
We love not less the things that are,
But more for what they lead us to.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

(*An Irish Legend*)

"Now I shall build a house of stone,
With lock and bar and slated roof;
Of toil and thrift the offspring grown,
The solid recompense and proof,"
He boasted . . .
But with greedy sight
He set a scheme and marked his ground,
And in a clouded silent night
He stripped stone-bare the fairies' mound;
And through the dark, with sideways look
Like some lean dog that steals a bone,
The fairies' hoarded spoil he took,
Cursed it . . . and built his house of stone.
And when a single glittering star
Fell on the hilltop evil-eyed,
He signed the Cross, set lock and bar,
And slept the sleep of sated pride . . .

Slept till the hour of midnight broke
In frightful tumult on his brain.
On every stone a hammer-stroke
Rang with a sharp unearthly strain;
And shining through the clashing gloom
Stern eyes were floating round his bed;
And with a glimmering frown of doom
Two figures held him foot and head,
While one, the spokesman of the rest,
With folded arms and tragic pique,
Strutted across his heaving breast,
And uttered in a bat's thin squeak
These words:
"It is an evil thing
To mint the golden fairy-weed,
And consecrated powers to bring
Under the chain of mortal greed.
It is an evil thing to bind
Limbs that have Love's free service wrought,
Or from the niggard leash of mind
To slip the hounds of selfish thought:
Evil when life's poor pots are filled
With purpose thin and stagnant grown,
And holy things are bent to build
A locked and darkened house of stone.

No rest from labour, sound and sweet,
Night to the builder shall accord,
But on his maddened brain shall beat
The fairy hammers of the Lord!"

He woke—and wondered whence the guilt
That through his being seemed to sound.
Then up he got, his house unbuilt,
And built again the fairies' mound.
And when his whispering neighbours drew
A sign that called him foolish-brained,
He smiled, because within he knew
A deeper wisdom he had gained.

LOVE IN THE HIGHEST

THE kiss made sweet by love confessed,
Was sweeter made by parting's fear.
Our words were quick and warm with zest
Because of silence threatening near.
All that the heart of pleasure knew
Held ache of what might never be;
And lyric hours in laughter flew
Across dumb gulfs of mystery.

But now our hearts no distance rends.
We take as equal, rose and thorn;
And know, where each high moment ends
Love's deeper life is only born.
Our happy hearts now find each bliss
But Love's light-pitched and moving kraal;
And know clasped hands and clinging kiss
Not Love, but Love's pale ritual.
So we have found and kept the sweet
Of laughter in the face of time,

And found the quenchless fires that beat
Beneath slow age's gathering rime.

Dear! we have stilled the heart's wild strife
In ecstasy of Love's repose.
The rose has faded out of life,
For life itself is now the Rose!

FUGITIVE LOVE

COME out, my lizard, hidden in the dusk,
And kiss kiss kiss me on my longing mouth.
Then if you will, away to shades of musk
Perfumed with promise for my spirit's drouth.
Come down, my squirrel, from your branch above.
Here on this breast, O shy one! cease from strife.
Then, if you must, O fugitive of love!
Play hide and seek around the tree of life.

THE SPENDTHRIFT

Lo! the spendthrift Moon-man spills
Wealth of silver on the stream,
And the rich glad water thrills
Giving gleam for gleam.

And the more his silver pile
Far he scatters from his store,
Earth and man with happy smile
Give him back the more.

Says the Moon-man, "Men (with tools!)
Count me dead long lives ago!"
Ask my poets (joy-drunk fools!)
—What do wise men *know*?

Hear the Spendthrift's richest word,
Would you know joy's utmost boon:
"Life is dead while life is stored."
. . . Brother, be a moon!

TO THE STILL-BORN CHILD OF A FRIEND

LITTLE barque that never knew
Sea-made music round your prow;
Morn that died before its dew;
Ageless thing untimed by Now;
Wind that never stirred to breath;
Door shut fast on rumours rife;
You, who have not tasted life,
Cannot know the sweet of death!

Ah! pale poet, on your tongue
Silence is the loudest word,
Ageing not, since never young;
Chanting like a hidden bird—
Peace comes deeper from your strife;
(Thus to us the Silence saith)
Not till you have tasted death
Can you know the sweet of life!

THE SHADOWY COMRADE

WHEN comes that hour in which my heart shall gaze
(Even as Dante on his Beatrice
Pale past recall of love's most fervent kiss)
On her who, living, filled my hungry days
With life and music, hope and a measure of praise;
Grant me, O Love! thine eye, averring, "This
Is shard of the budded beech, the chrysalis
Cast where no more the new-winged spirit stays."
So when the dear familiar thing decays,
I shall not grope in the clay for what I miss,
And at her hem of pearl and chrysoprase
Pluck her with sighs back to this realm of Dis;

But in sweet hope shall haunt her heavenly
ways,
A shadowy comrade on her path to bliss.

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

LORD.! for the pride that boasted, "In hold ire
Wield we the Sword of the Lord," let not thy brow
Blast us in wrath.—Who trieth the nations but Thou,
Thou whose Name as of old is Consuming Fire?
For the pigmy reach of the soul's enforced desire,
(The virtue dared in face of the threatening Now),
Thou through our dreams hast driven Thy quickening plough
To stir our inanimate clay to Thy purpose nigher.
"Give peace," we pray, "give peace in our time, O Lord!"
But first give wisdom, deeper than deed or word,

To learn that not till the inward conflict cease,
And the will of the flesh with Thine move in accord,
Past self that is parent of strife, shall the ancient Sword
Of Thy Love's purgation be sheathed in a lasting peace.

CASTLES IN SPAIN

THOSE are the very hills of Spain
That lift their spears in morning light
Full-bladed to the charging main,
Like old Cervantes' gallant knight.

Could we but pierce the golden mist,
Now might we scan some castle wall
Made sweet by waking maid, sun-kissed
On lips most pure, most musical.

Yet, had we Druid power to leap
The waves, or travel Israel's way,
Would we from fancy's dream-lit sleep
Call us and you to glaring day?
And bid your storied galleons sail
Pale phantoms down a long-dead wind,
Laughed by our lithe lean ships of mail
Out of the harbour of the mind?

No! not one oar's-length nearer come,
Lest, for the dream that round you clings,
We take the hard insistent drum
And shameless pipe of real things.

Set on imagination's verge
That holds and shapes the wandering will,
Where sense and vision subtly merge,
Your mystery be mystery still;
And still your fabled sunken gold
Gleam through the deeps of heart and brain,
And we our magic castles hold
Dream-built in an unsullied Spain.

Off the Spanish Coast
October, 1915

BIRDS AT SEA

CRISS-CROSSING our wake along the blue
Mediterranean Sea,
Wings agleam in the sunrays flew
Swiftly and tirelessly.

"Petrels, prophets of storm," said some.
"Swallows," said others, "from war-lands
come,
Sick of sulphur and death-winged hum,
Seeking a summer of peace."
Soon may their seeking cease!

But I, keen-sighted, clearly knew
They held not to land or sea,
But were bodied out of the thoughts that flew,
Dear friends! the love-winged thoughts from
you

That followed us followed us over the blue
Mediterranean Sea.

Off Sicily
November, 1915

TO SAROJINI NAIDU

From a lion great in death
Honey came, a scripture saith.
Yea, and out of ancient song
Sweetness cometh from the strong—
Names that move, but cannot pass,
Sappho, Dante, Kalidas,
And their singing kindred . . . Still,
Though we climb a lesser hill,
There are hidden heights to scale
Reckoned not in classic tale;
And on singers of our time
Waits a subtler power of rhyme
That can raise a fairy wind
Laying all the ghosts of mind,
Gaudy doubts that bend the knee
To a moment's ecstasy.

Such a wind has moved your wings,
Bird that from life's prison sings!
Caged familiar of the skies
In whose spirit-lighted eyes
India's wisdom, deep and long,
Blossoms lightly into song,
Crowning with a deathless crown
You who sang death's menace down,
And in lyric joy displayed
Strength in weakness perfect made.

Though not yours the sounding wing
Poised on splendid questioning,
Or the massy music lent
By a ruder instrument
Blaring all the foolish strife
'Twixt those lovers, Death and Life;
Yours is song in skyey flight
Unlaborious as the light,
Mixed with golden music won
From soul-nearness to the sun,
Native to a coming day
Far upon our human way
When in eyes of all shall shine
What is prophecy in thine.

Wherefore, songstress, on our tongue
Grief for song you might have sung
Perishes in thankfulness
For the gift wherewith you bless
This our day—no strained, profound
Chant in caverns underground,
Nor the sweetness of the strong
Echoed out of ancient song,
But (for loss our deeper gain)
Sweeter sweetness born of pain.

A SONG IN PRAISE OF EARTH

I

Tamas of Tamas, Sat of Sat,
Dead clay and life-diffusing sun,
Intimate This, remotest That,
Behind their myriad shapes are one.
So reads my book . . . And all around,
Glad nature quickens after rain.
The earth-brown peasant on his ground
Turning brown earth for future grain
Strides with his striding oxen twain.
Over the deep-dug silent pool
The weaver-bird has hung her nest
That swings in safety as a cool
Soft wind comes chanting from the west
Lifting the morning's filmy veil;
And where my leafy shade is spread,
Koel to koel overhead
Blows his loud flute's ascending scale.

II

So keenly Earth's clear challenge comes
Let by the wind's heart-thrilling drums,
With straight full eye, and steady hand
Bearing for sword the mage's wand,
That all the proud and powerful past
Fades to a shadow shadow-cast,
And sets its ear against a tree
To catch Earth's simple mystery
Which none may utter mind to mind,
But all who seek shall surely find.

III

Oh! in such hours, from life apart
Yet closer to its inmost heart,
How freshly comes upon our dearth,
How calmly on our gusty moods,
The authenticity of Earth,
The deep sincerity of woods,
The pure strong passion of the sea;
The fluttering glad futility
Of hosting moths that take to air,
To "Whither?" answer, "Anywhere!

What matter? 'Twixt the dawn and night
All's home where there is wind and sun,
And time for frolic, space for flight,
And what-may-be when flight is done!"

IV

How shrewdly comes from hedge and tree
Rebuke from many a sounded fife
To those who, looking, never see,
And, too much living, miss great Life;
Who, snatching Wealth's bedraggled hem,
The Spirit's bounty never knew
When evening proffered unto them
The moon-pearl on a pearly hand
Of cloud outheld through deepest blue
Above a sapphire-paven land;
Who miss, for all the noise and glare
On passing pleasure vainly spent,
The ecstasy of those who share
Maid Beauty's chaste abandonment.

V

Too long to Earth we dole the wage
Of proudly shallow patronage.

No need hath she for wreaths of song
That boast them her interpreters.
Nay, far more fitly is it hers
To lay her prophet-length along
Our deadness, and to meaning raise
The corpse of crowded empty days,
And set against our shrill unease
Her ancient quiet certainties.
" Put by," she counsels, " would you live,
Shed garments of the buried years.
New day must day's new garment give;
Nor, spite of backward-glancing tears,
Can you take comfort from the old
If you would sight the Age of Gold.
Know that alone you proudly cast
The gage of war for this,—to hold
Out of your tuneless iron age
Some relic of the mouldered past,
Some squalid sacred privilege.
Oh! wiselier far my vagrants go
Who daily take with youthful laugh
The immortal Pilgrim's bowl and staff,
And, reading well my secret, know
That Joy takes never Peace to wife
While death usurps the place of life.
From grasping thought my pilgrims part,

And down love's pathways pure and plain
They reach, beyond the sundering brain,
The instant nuptials of the heart."

VI

Lo, unto eyes whose gaze is true,
She momently makes all things new;
Changeless through change doth lightly pass.
Behold, the dry bent blade of grass
Whose shade and substance made a square,
Now rounds its shadow to ellipse;
And through a myriad thrilling tips
Her reach is onward everywhere,
Timing to dance of sun and sod
The young adventuring of God.
Yea, and though all (when all is done)
Behind their myriad shapes be one,
No truer wisdom through our days
Will straighten out our devious ways
To where beyond the shadowy Fates
We shall have speech with One who waits,
Than this,—to thank the God whose grace
Put eyes within our forward face,
Pathfinding for the runner Soul
Not back to start, but on to goal.

VII

Who finds this wisdom finds the might
To climb the Tree of Life, and reach
Cool sanctuaries of restraint
Where poise is window unto sight,
And silence winnower of speech;
Where love has lost the tiger-taint
In vision of the bridal mirth
That blends Divinity with Earth,
Bone of true bone, true flesh of flesh.
Inly they know what purpose broods
When midnight drags her starry mesh
Along the deep infinitudes;
What pride gives dignity to dust;
From trampled grape comes what sweet
must;
What love moves the confederate Powers
Wherewith Fate wields her lightest wand,
Or in dark salutary hours
Turns down a catastrophic hand.
. . . Softly they sleep whose heads have found
The solid comfort of the sod;
Who know, outstretched on holy ground,
That nearest Earth is nearest God.

A SONG AT DAWN

VOICE of the Dawn, resistless voice
Through harmonies of sun and wave!
I hear you, and my limbs and veins rejoice
New risen from the night's deep grave.

I hear you, and my heart is glad
To feel your keen awakening lance.
No sweeter joy the dreamful darkness had
Than bulbul's song or insect's dance.

Roll up the gaudy scroll of dreams,
The tangled skein of vision-stuff:
Under the morning's branched and flowering beams,
Life wholly lived is life enough.

Why look for deeper, fuller hours
With hours about us unfulfilled?

The wiser mango greenly breaks in flowers
Though not a cloud its rain has spilled.

But when the thankful arid ways
Have drunk its perfume, sweetly spread,
God shall bestow a recompense of days
That pour refreshment on its head.

O ye who seek the far-descried,
With nearness void! hear Wisdom's art:
You shall not lift from joy's exhaustless tide
More than the measure of the heart.

Vainly for larger life we yearn,
Or queenlier blooms of truth to blow,
Till we in life's least moments gladly learn
To live the little truth we know.

THE BANYAN TREE

UNDER the banyan thickly lie
Leaves like an autumn newly shed,
Yet keen against the sapphire sky
The green of spring breaks overhead.

So closely neighbour birth and death,
It seems the all-pervading sun
Holds in a trance-like pause of breath
Past, present, future, blent in one.

Yea, folded here in calm beside
Our shallow fret of joy and ruth,
Back on itself the living tide
Augustly flows from age to youth;
For age in wrinkles witch-like stands
And leans great wisdom on her crutch,
Yet pushes forth adventuring hands
Earthward for youth to spring at touch.

Had we thy secret, ancient child!
Our hearts might lightlier pay time's toll;
Count years behind, not on us piled,
Each hour the birth-time of the soul.

So might we thy large saneness share,
Roots proud in clay, and fruitage skied;
Not wholly thinned to fire and air,
Nor in earth-darkness wholly tied.

Unto which end our prayer is made
That we, from deeper vision won
Here where the night-like slumbrous shade
Is cast and mixed with noonday sun,
May glimpse where fast the shuttle gleams,
Flying to weave in mystic ways
Something of daylight in our dreams,
Something of dreaming in our days.

Adyar, Madras.

BALANCE

WAIL not that the thorny spear
Pricks about this Persian rose.
Rather count it good that here
Beauty out of harshness grows.
. . Though the feathery tamarind
Acid fruitage hangs in air,
Spiny cactus, leather-skinned,
Gives a sweetly savoured pear.
. . Let the parrots, gorgeous-hued,
Sharply scold across the sky;—
Plain-robed warblers of the wood
Sweetness out of shadow cry.

What if sunlight, fostering
Nested frailty shut from sight,
Strikes in gold along the wing
Of the circling slaughterous kite:
Thus (and in the human heart
Where, across a swinging gate,

Joy and sorrow meet or part)
Nature holds her balance straight;
Wheels us in a roundabout,
Each to others' purpose pressed,
As our sun-screen, shredded out,
Makes a thieving squirrel's nest.

Yet, look deeper; you may know
Something subtly intertwined
In the clash of foe and foe,
Or the link of kind with kind;
Something that untwists the Rope,
And, through slits in sound and shape,
Finds towards a larger scope
Hidden pathways of escape.

Hold this truth;—the maze of things
Is by one deep rapture stirred,
As a poet soothly sings
Meanings past his wisest word.

Madanapalle, South India.

UNITY

HIGH on the rock-paved praying-ground
The sons of Allah stand,
Then in obeisance, mute, profound,
Bend earthward head and hand.

In robe and turban many-hued
They bloom upon the mind—
A bank of flowers in prayerful mood
That bends before a wind.

And here, beside the white-towered shrine,
God Shiva's ancient seat,
Field-blossoms in the sunlight shine
About my wandering feet.

Then, as a breeze across my brow
On some glad errand runs,
They bow, as in devotion bow
Allah's and Shiva's sons.

So calm the encircling hills, so sweet
The jasmine-scented air,
God, Man and Nature seem to meet
And blot out Here and There;

And show that, under painted mask,
One holy impulse stirs
Those flowers that grace from Allah ask,
These clay-born worshippers.

In such clear glimpses of the Whole
Our foolish barriers fall,
For who finds kinship with the soul
Is kindred unto all.

Madanapalle, South India.

TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Dedicating a book of prose

I THOUGHT for golden poesy
In dedicated prose to pay,
Veiling impossibility
In that old kindly courteous way.
But all your flowing tide of fame
Went singing round my echoing shore
When on my page I put your name—
And made my debt but tenfold more!

Yea, and the world that holds your praise
Moves thus between two powers at feud—
Speech that undoes what it essays,
And silence like ingratitude.

Yet since a sacramental hand
May sanctify the humblest weed,
I lift our love's transforming wand

And give intention for the deed,
With one deep wish that, till the set
Of sun across your song's wide sea,
Our backs may bend with growing debt
For your pure golden poesy!

AFTER A LADY HAD PLAYED ON THE VINA

BECAUSE men's little hearts had turned away
After strange deities of power and pride,
The populous heavens (which to the wonder-eyed
Stark savage held great hands that bade him pray)
Shrank, in chill reason, to a span of day
Night-clasped; and gods, clean shorn of homage, sighed
Leaving star-thrones changed to mere earth enskied,
Built there, as here, on silence and decay!
But unto us, O sister in song! to us,
Outcasts of pride and power, attuned alone
To sound as vina to the Spirit's will,
One came, whose presence, vastly luminous,

Thrilled us to prayer, while trumpets deeply
blown
Cried, "Lo! the Immortals mix with
mortals still!"

INDIAN PARAPHRASES

I: A GOPI-SONG TO SRI KRISHNA

SOMEONE spake of moon and sun ;
But for me, in love grown wise,
Through the dark and light made one
Only shone your searching eyes.

What, to those who never knew,
Was the midnight sky's expanse,
Looked my throbbing spirit through
With your comprehending glance.

And the long cloud-tresséd air
That to others moved beyond,
Wrapped me in your silken hair
Gemmed with pearl and diamond.

Now along the flowery grove
By the champak's odorous pile,

Eyes made vision-full by love
See your deep alluring smile.

Koel's note from tree to tree
Speaks your voice with sweetest smart,
And the dark blue rolling sea
Tells the pulsing of your heart.

And for me my happy doom
Shines upon your ageless face,
Bride of your eternal bloom
Held in your divine embrace.

Paraphrased from the Tamil of C. Subramania Barathi.

II: THE MYSTIC CHURN

O YE whose feet all Godward run,
Pause! for the Ever-Shining One
Comes not for drum or perfumed silk.
He hides as *ghi* within the milk,
Essence enfolded, unexpressed.
Would you behold Him manifest?—
Gather your eyes from quests above:
Take you the churning-rod of Love:
Wrap round its upright stem the tense
Two-ended cord, Intelligence . . .
Pull! . . and for Wisdom loving-eyed,
And Love in Wisdom purified,
Unto your eyes made clear by grace
He shall unveil His shining Face.

Paraphrased from the Tamil of Saint Appar, early seventh century.

III: THE BARGAIN

TUKA to Ishwara saith:
We shall take, if so Thou will,
Birth; and learn of life and death.
But we ask that Thou shalt fill
All our life-ways, dark and long,
With remembrance of Thy Face,
And with comrades rich in song
Mindful of our heavenly place.

So in frailty of the flesh
We may travel free from stain;
Miss the snaring senses' mesh,
Yea, and freedom's subtle chain.

Song, and Thee the song to fill
In the space from birth to death,
Grant us these—then have Thy will,
Tuka to Ishwara saith.

Paraphrased from the Marathi of Tukaram, seventeenth century.

IV: THE SEVEN ARROWS

SEVEN wounds hurt me within :—
A moon in daylight, pale and thin;
Withered beauty past its hour;
Water with no lotus-flower;
Noble manhood void of mind;
Wealth that knows not to be kind;
Wisdom weak from hunger's sting;
Evil counselling a king.

These (till life and I shall part)
Seven arrows pierce my heart.

Paraphrased from the Samskrit of Bhartrihari about the seventh century.

V: NALA MAKES A MISTAKE

So kindly me my lady eyed,
Come on love's glad mission,
All my being laughed, and cried:
"Love has found contrition!"

Oh! so bright her eye-beam glanced
That in love's delirium
All my happy fingers danced
Shining with collirium
Offered, not with hope to make
Beauty beautifuller,
But for old sweet custom's sake,
To my heart's proud ruler.

... Ah! such fancies us o'ertake
Who to love devote us!—
What I looked on was—a lake,
And her eye—a lotus!

Stepping down I quickly learned
Life's cold erudition:
Quenching flood on love that burned!
Pity my condition.

Paraphrased from the Marathi of Raghunatha Pandit, seventeenth century.

VI: THE DEVOTEE

ONLY on my constant prayer
Lord! to thee, my soul relies;
I who no proud purpose bear,
Nor the burden of the wise.

No consoling boast is mine
Won from sacred pilgrimage:
Only to an inner shrine
Go my feet from youth to age.

Me no deep-eyed fastings waste,
Seeking thus a swifter goal:
Only day and night I taste
Quenchless hunger of the soul.

Yet, though in the forest deep
I am but a wind-borne flower,
Knowing not the spells that keep
Danger far, nor words of power;

Conning not the Vedic art
In Benares' calm retreat,
I, who only yield my heart,
Find all wisdom at thy Feet.

Paraphrased from the Hindi of Rani Mirabai, sixteenth century.

VII: THE HOLY DANCE

(A Song to the Child Krishna)

HERE in my courtyard, where the breeze
Bears odours of the champak trees,
And high in blue unclouded calm
Sways leisurely the fruiting palm,
Come! Little One, at cool of day,
And on your flute soft music play.

Oh! fresh as music-haunted wind,
Come! thou enchanter of my mind.
Lift up thine ageless infant glance,
And in my heart's cool courtyard dance
The joy that foots the years along,
Till all my being break in song.

Dance! Holy Child. My melody
Shall speak our joy, who inly see
Heaven's courtyard here on earthly
ground,

And hear a music past our sound,
And know in every joy and woe
God's onward footsteps dancing go!

From the same.

VIII: *THE GARLAND OF LIFE*

Flowers plucked at dawn of day,
Garlanded love's glad way,
Lord! at thy threshold, I, thy flower-girl, lay.

Yea, and a fairer flower
From my heart's hidden bower.
Ah! let thy lips now speak the word of power,
Breaking to finer mould
This earth of me, to unfold
Fit blooms of grace for thee, Lord, to behold.

So shall my beaded throat
Find fuller, purer note,
To sing thy name; and I to thee devote
My house of nights and days
To song, and of life's ways,
Joyous or sad, weave garlands in thy praise.

From the same.

MOULTED FEATHERS

First Edition 1919
Second Edition 1922

To Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

MOULTED FEATHERS

Along the line on the yellow sand where the tide
to its highest rose,
A long white line of moulted feathers of vanished
sea-birds is spread.
Strangely it shakes the heart with the touch of a
life beyond ours, a life that comes and goes,
Fulness—and ebb into distance; flight—and its
wing defeated and shed.

And perhaps on the mystic verge of desire, where
immortal and mortal meet,
Where the Land of the Ever Young is frayed and
strewn by the urge of our human tide,
Some godlike one will smile and sigh at these
moulted feathers of song at his feet—
And I shall be satisfied.

THE SILENT POOL

(*Rondeau*)

THE Silent Pool stands crystal clear
Among the silent woods of Shere,
Where trout and gold-fish, unafraid,
Moving as shades within the shade,
Are all that stir the placid mere.
And you, my friend, are standing near,
And pierce the silence with a spear
Of jest that wakes the sleepy glade,
    The Silent Pool.
Perhaps, when leaves of life turn sere,
And age slows down the pulse's weir;
In silent hours, when dreams are made,
Some thought of hours when here we strayed
Deep in the heart will stir with cheer
    Its Silent Pool.

A DESERTED NEST

I CLIMBED a tree, and found a nest
With gaping beaks and sprouting wings.
My hand in kindliness caressed
The little downy cheeping things.
  Ah! Love, let Wisdom be thy mate
  Lest thou perform the work of Hate.

Shy Nature has her sanctuaries
Where even Love unwelcome goes.
The mother-bird, made birdly wise,
Will leave the nest where danger shows.
  I climbed the tree another day.—
  Dead in the nest the fledglings lay!

Ah! Love, be not untimely kind,
Lest thine all gentle step intrude
Upon the poet's nesting mind
And scare away the mother-mood;
  And leave, in lieu of singing guest,
  Dead birds in a deserted nest!

SONG

For the beloved, arranging a vase of flowers

A VASE from Noron in Normandy—
Oh! good red clay from the appled south!
And poppies plucked from a garden in Speke—
Oh! burning lips of the summer's mouth!
White fingers that beauty to beauty join—
Up! flutes and trumpets in marriage glee!
And dust as the first and last of all—
Oh! life . . . Oh! death . . . Oh! mystery!

Say, then, Is joy but a painted mask?—
Oh! lie, sweet lie of the mocking spring!
And nothing sure to the hungry hand?—
Oh! Something that ever is on the wing! . . .
Were Beauty beauty without our eyes?—
Oh! star that out of the darkness fell!
Would Death be death if it shared not life?—
Ah! lips that know, but shrink to tell!

LOVE ANTIPHONAL

JUST as the first faint thought of light
Disturbs the dreaming head of night,
A koel in the sandal tree
Cries *Love, O Love!* in ecstasy.
And far away, past peering eyes,
Love, Love! a koel's note replies.
O my wee dear! a faint voice calls,
And from the dim-seen mango falls
Love's instant answer, *My wee dear!*
And everywhere the far and near
Join through the voice of rook and dove
In morn's antiphony of love.

Ah! shall the love-song of the bird
Lack the full finish of a word
Of heartfelt conscious human speech
Æons beyond bird-meaning's reach?
Nay! let love's circle be complete,
And you and I call *Sweet* to *Sweet*

While the enfolding arms of light
Take to day's heart the dreams of night.

Madanapalle, India.

LATE MONSOON

No blade of song parched fingers pluck.
No thought-cloud cools the red-rimmed eye.
Life's quenchless burning sun-lips suck
The heart-fruit cracked and dry!
Down to her core the soul shall rend
In awful thirsting pain
Unless God in his mercy send
The singing rain!

O God! write, write in gathering shade
Thy cloud-account across the sky.
The price be set, the bargain made;
I ask not how or why,
But this: Let passionate lightning rend,
Thought's thunder shake, the brain,
If these must come before Thou send
Song-giving rain.

TIDES

Slowly the solemn tide of flowing night
Creeps up the shore of day from mark to
mark,
Whelming the painted harlotry of sight
In cleansing dark.

Love! at our day's end may the Spirit roll
Lifeward its vast obliterating tide,
And in its depths the scarred and stainéd soul
Be purified!

THE COIN

A BEGGAR, through the woods I passed,
Craving some boon to solace grief;
And Nature blew a laugh, and cast
Into my hat—a withered leaf!

Now I the young and gay will join,
And spend my wealth, and sing in glee,
Because of that exhaustless coin
That spendthrift Nature threw to me!

THE POET TO HIS ALTER EGO

IN A PESSIMISTIC MOOD

Alter Ego

WHEN I walk along the street,
Every human face I meet
Seems a trivial burdened elf
Mimicking my baser self!
'Twixt me and the dream I made
They have set a palisade.
I go vainly up and down
Shut in a beleaguered town.

Poet

Brother! if you would escape
From the chain of size and shape,
And behold your guiding star;—
Leave the perpendicular

Where your eye's earth-levelled lance
Breaks on phantom circumstance,
And your ocean-peace is lost
In its shore-waves' clamouring host.
Find a place of grass, and lie
Looking straight into the sky,
Stretched (the thought comes with a shock)
Like Prometheus on his rock.—
(Yet if you the fire would find,
You must pay the price in kind,
Since Life's Tree must yield as dower
Wood for Crucifixion's hour,
Ere the sky-stair can be made
For the Soul's high escalade,
And the thorny Circlet blows
To the Spirit's living Rose).
Then, your back to solid ground,
You shall know the Peace profound,
When your eyesight's mystic Tree
Blossoms towards the Mystery
God in Farness writeth clear
For the measure of the Near;
Setting Vastness as a ring
On the hand of Every-Thing;
Furnishing the Whole, to house
Great, with Littleness for spouse.

Finding this, your heart shall find
Wisdom past the sundering mind.
Eyes of Godward-groping men
Brotherly shall greet you . . . Then
Rise, and take among the throng
Deeper vision, sweeter song.

THE TAJ MAHAL

I

The Paradox

WHAT love exhaled what beauty! What desire
Broke whitely past the flesh, and in dumb stone
Found silence louder than the heart's wild tone
That for vast sorrow raised this moonlit pyre!
Flame to white flame, minar and slender spire
He bade arise, consuming his deep moan.
Vain! Vain! . . . His grief for us to bliss has grown
Through beauty's quenchless and preserving fire.
. . . Canst Thou not leave us to our little ends,
Allah! nor our dear purposes annoy
With something deeper than the eye can see,

As here, where, more than stricken love intends,
Sorrow is throned on everlasting joy,
And death is crowned with immortality?

Agra, April 1918, Midnight.

II

The Forgotten Workers

TEN thousand and ten thousand came and
 went,
Forgotten builders of one lasting name,
Even as fuel perishes to flame,
Grapes to new wine, their strength for others
 spent.
Yet here they have enduring monument
(One with the master's whom our lips proclaim)
Beyond the loud irrelevance of fame,
The worker lost, in his great work content.
. . . Ah! smile on us who build Thy House of
 Life,
Allah! that we, though nameless, have the
 grace
To perish greatly in Thy rising fane
Where Beauty wields pain's hammer, death's
 keen knife.

Grant us oblivion in Thy shining Face;
All else forgotten, Thou alone remain.

III

The Murmurs in the Dome

SUNRISE . . . The servant makes his morning round,
And on the tombs his duster flicks and swings
With a soft swish. A raucous beggar sings.—
High in the dome, caught swiftly from the ground,
Murmur and murmur echo and rebound,
Transfiguring those abject common things
To heavenly Presences on rustling wings
Joined in a conclave of celestial sound.
. . . Had we but ears made pure that we might hear,
Allah! beyond this flying dust of speech
The authentic Voice that our vain words eclipse,
Ah! then, the Infinite low-murmuring near,

We might outsing our beggar-whine, and
reach
A godlike utterance on human lips.

IV

The Passing of the Builder

For her alone, love's queen, this queenly tomb
He planned; and for himself in thought essayed
On Jamuna's thither margin to be laid
In a severer pomp of kingly gloom.
Ah! vainly men to fashion fate presume.—
Steadfast through passing empires, here arrayed
In deathless beauty he himself had made,
Dust by her dust, he finds his perfect doom.
. . . Open our eyes, and unto them display,
Allah! the hidden Taj that through our strife
Invisibly we build with passion's fire
And thought's high sculpturing. Grant us each day
Beautiful burial, sweet death in life,
And peace at last beside the Heart's Desire.

FAREWELL

To Eleanor and Kathleen Elder, exponents of the Greek Dance, on leaving India for Europe in wartime.

I

FAREWELL . . . Ah yes, who strive for name
Or pride, may joy awhile, and tire.
The lightest wind may quench light flame ;
But storms can only fan the fire
That burns within the ardent breast,
Of those who count a fingered string,
A throbbing phrase, a foot's light zest,
Than life or death a goodlier thing.

For anyone can live and die,
Breathe, and desire, and cease to be ;
But unto few is given the eye
To read life's meaning crystally ;

To know art's pang of birthtime strain,
And God's perpetual springtime feel,
Leave custom's Saturn on his chain,
And run with Hermes winged at heel.

II

FAREWELL ... Fare well! Ah, well you fare,
Strong souls whose deep or sportive mood
Reveals the heavenly Playwright there
Who looks on life, and finds it good;
Aye, and for Ill a place has made
At Virtue's side her part to play,
Sisterly as the light and shade
That are twin offspring of the Day.

O Miriams of a later birth!
Sea-crossers, you have sure reward,
Who trace upon our common earth
The dancing footsteps of the Lord.
Scathless through death-strewn seas you go
Where murder lurks on dark swift wing,
Safe in the joy of those who know
The thing is nought,—the Play's the thing.

III

FAREWELL . . . Ah no, they cannot part
Who meet beyond the hand and brain ;
Who taste within the cloistered heart
The mutual sacrament of pain—
Pain that is one with bursting shoots,
The strain and hope of fledging wings,
Creation's sharp sweet urge that puts
The stamp of heaven on earthly things.

Art's vagrants, they have instant home
Where rhythm and colour move and gleam,
And over them the starry dome
Holds wealth beyond the miser's dream.
Lonely, yet linked by speechless vow
Are they, and covered with her robe,
Beauty, whose touch on one true brow
Stirs all her loyers round the globe.

CLAY

To a student sculptor, to commemorate his first model

I

HIS eyes with fresh creation shone.
Before him new-made beauty lay.
Deep wonder-eyed
In art's first smarting joy he cried:
'I did not think I could have done
So much with such rough clay!'

Master! when our crude lives have won
The stamp that doth Thy Hand display,
Perhaps Thou too wilt cry
(Thou, even Thou, Artist of earth and sky):
'I did not think I could have done
So much with such rough clay!'

II

BROTHER! if clay unto your finger's clay
Make answer swift and just
In this high heavenly way;
If 'dust to dust'
In beauty wed
Be no poor phrase of parting o'er the dead,
But metaphor of God's own finger-thrust
Breaking our shapeless night to shapen day;
Yea, if our fashioning hands are born of
  Earth,
And she through them in Art find second
  birth
(Mother and daughter of our fathering years
Through mutual torture of creation's fears
And hopes uplifted high),
And through our flesh reach finer mould
In death's disintegrating cold;
Now may we shed our human arrogance
(We, lonely, self-outcast from sod and sky),
And, underneath the kindred glance
Of Earth's glad suffering eye,
Glimpse the majestic purposes of pain
Crumbling our mortal rust
In some immortal Artist's play;

And in a sunlit new-discovering rain
Of happy tears
Dance with the homeless tribe of driven dust,
And share the ecstasy of trampled clay.

III

BLESSÉD are they who thus can find
Kinship with clay and sun and wind!
They in the wounds of life's harsh feuds
Pour oil and balm of Art's beatitudes.
Blesséd the opened ears
Wherein the music of orchestral spheres
Moves, as upon a stream a murmuring whirl!
Blesséd the seeing eyes that in the plash
Of rain find wealth in pearl on pearl!
And blessèd they who, for the clash
Of their close-grappling wills
(Will of the flesh, the mind, the imperious soul)
Find weapons wholly meet
Where ocean doth her storming legions roll,
Or where bright rivers blade-like flash
Out of the resonant scabbards of the hills!

Blesséd the wingéd feet
That move with Hermes-lightness on the
  rough
Ascending human way,
Comrades, not vassals, of the clay!
Thrice blesséd they,
Loving all things, yet taking none to wife,
Who count abundant life
Good, yet not good enough
For those whose being has its root
Past sound or sight,
Nourished on starry fruit
Plucked from the laden branches of the night!

REALISATION

THIS day I give in my Soul's calendar
A place apart; for suddenly I knew
The secret joy of everything that grew,
The bliss that perished with the falling star,
The choric burden on the wave-swept bar,
Why the stream sang, what news the tempest blew,
And why the koel chuckled as he flew,
And what glad voices call in things afar.
Oh! *Onward* was their word of joy to me,—
The happy pain of life that ever flows
From infinite to infinite, and gives
The push of change against our fixity.
Joy passes? Aye, and grief as quickly goes.
Speed on, my Soul, with all that truly lives!

SURYA-GITA

[*SUN SONGS*]

1922.

DEDICATION

TO KATHLEEN-NI-HOULIHAN

Not the loud songs of joyful ease
I give, as once on morning's wing;
But, for your night of agonies,
I give dark songs I cannot sing.

Take them, Beloved! and, deeper far
Than moods that wear a transient name,
Take love whose wordless poems are
The throbbing silence round a flame;

Love that my veins with passion thrids,
Kindling your candles in my eyes,
And from my heart's red censer bids
Perpetual worship rise.

Before December 6, 1921.

SURYA-GITA

(SUN SONGS)

I: GORGEOUS LIES

Nought that enters the eye
Is itself in simple sooth.
Only the poet's painted lie
Limneth the face of truth.

A frog jumps after a fly—
And the steel-hard face of the lake
Wrinkles to smiling mouths of sky.
  The swimming water-snake,
Darting death with its fang,
Wriggles to rhythm of light.
  Reversed the mountains hang—
Vast boughs of blossoming night
Wherethrough, day's season done,
From the gathered fruit of day
The expressed juices run,
Rich red through silver and grey;

Wine of God's gladness given
To earth as the pledgings pass
From the tankard of heav'n to the heaven
In the lake's over-brimming glass.
  Wagtails flirting fly
With a flash at each splashing tip.
  A swirl of vapour on high
Is a golden sailing ship
Carrying merchandise
Of myth and marvel and dream
To the harbours of wise.
  Ah! what compassionate gleam
In the eye of evening wakes,
Whose brooding ecstasy
To deep commingling shakes
The heart of the world and me!
Mystery thrilling to tears
Through the twilit sedges sings.
The glory of God appears
Through trivial inglorious things.

Nought to the seeing eye
May be sung for itself in sooth.
Only the poet's gorgeous lie
Telleth the simple truth.

II: THE MISER AND THE COIN

" ALMS for the poor ! " Night thinly whined,
And held to Day his begging-bowl.
His dark rags trembled in the wind.
Day felt soft pity in his soul,
And in his bag, of cloud-thread spun,
Searched with compassionate hands of light,
And dropped his golden coin (the sun)
Into the begging-bowl of Night.

Night laughed, and wagged his miser head,
And on the floor of darkness poured
His day-hid wealth of stars, and said :
" Now comes, to swell my silver hoard,
That foolish pilgrim's golden gift."
He turned—but lo ! the coin was gone . . .
And through a far-off cloudy rift
Came the slow subtle smile of Dawn.

Santiniketan, October 1921.

III: THE GIANT AND THE POMEGRANATE

DARKNESS, a giant vast of mouth,
For the slaking of his drouth,
Drags from cloud-branch overhead
Day's one fruit,—a rounded, red,
Pomegranate people call the sun.
Through his hands red juices run
As he breaks it on the far
Sharp horizon's scimitar.
Then, his cheeks and mouth and beard
With the ruddy liquor smeared,
Loudly laughing at his joke
(To have robbed the human folk
Of the fruit that fills their needs),
Flings he the pomegranate seeds
Far across the fields of night.
... Lo! a myriad buds of light
Break in silver shoots of hope

That along the morning slope
Scarlet-skirted blooms will run
Leading the pomegranate sun.

Santiniketan.

IV: THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

FATHER! from distant lands of night
I come, Thy wandering child.
With Thee, at Thy first kiss of light,
My heart is reconciled;
And, for my bankrupt spirit's need,
Thy love's warm fingers run
Spreading the sky's rich title-deed
Sealed with Thy seal—the sun.

Santiniketan.

MOON MELODIES

I: WORSHIP

[*After the Japanese*]

DAY'S lord forgets, but night's dear queen remembers.
(Brothers! rejoice that from our fiery past
Faithfully doth last
One of all its dead and scattered embers.)

Moon, O Moon ash-white!
Thou dost call
Thy true lovers all
Round the legend-haunted hearth of night,
Friend with friend, not rival;
Living sharers in thy grace;
Yea, and in thine unforgetting face
Long dead lovers of thee find survival.

Round thine enthronéd feet a wind hath stirred
Full of the passion of the quick and dead
Who whisper towards thee, and with lifted head
Await thy sweet confiding word.
But (alas! unlike a mortal woman)
Language thy snow-chaste lip eschews:
Only the lonely dedicated muse
Thou dost silently illumine.
Yet to him who prayeth,
Dreading the chill of dark oblivion,
"Fade all—if thy remembrance but be won,"
Something secret sayeth,
For his heart's deep recompense,
"None who worship me
Shall forgotten be."

. . . Wherefore, Brother ages hence!
Spreading, as once I spread, a praiseful wing,
When in love's ritual you con her,
Singing then (as now I sing)
At the quiet evening's fall,
Ah! recall
Worshipfully I too looked upon her.

II: ECLIPSE

(*Spirit of the Earth*)

WHAT shadow spreads across thy face,
O Moon beloved! and veils the grace
Once on thy lover Earth bestowed?
Hast thou, on thy celestial road,
Come on a rumour, comet-spread,
That all thy youthful fire is dead?
Or blurs thine eye with smoky smart
Of conflagration in the heart
Lit from anticipation's rage
At passionless approaching age?
Or dost thou at my ardour quail,
And take the chaste monastic veil
As refuge for thy mystery
From eyes that seek the soul of thee,
And count their age-long search undone
Till (as of old) we twain are one?
Ah love, dark love! perhaps thy mood,

As test for love's dear plenitude,
Hides thy fair face that I may seek
With thine unbodied self to speak;
Or chants a curtained palinode
For love unworthily bestowed.
Whate'er it be—desire or dread
Of cold or heat—that hides thy head;
Oh! from thy tower of darkness lean
And say what shadow falls between
Thee and thy lover's hungry moan.

(*Spirit of the Moon*)

Beloved! the shadow is—thine own!

A DEAD SCARAB

NEVER rose in Grecian air,
To a life gone otherwhere,
Half so fair a cenotaph
As this beetle's body ; chaff
From death's threshing ; skyey wrack
Flung upon a jungle track ;
Turquoise and opal thrown away
In the pleasure of a day.

What of mighty bulk and plan !
Here, beyond the skill of man,
God had polished with His sleeve
Tints of iridescent eve
To a subtle wavering sheen ;
Blue that melted into green ;
And a tint that hardly knew
Whether it was green or blue
Or a magic tincture cast
When some seraph's pinion passed

Scattering splendours not its own
From the rainbow round the Throne.

Then, as towards the ground I bent
Rapt in silent wonderment,
Half a hundred beetles flew
Past with so loud joy, I knew
If my blood would stand but still,
I might see God on the hill
Furbishing with all His might
Creatures for an hour's delight;
Breathing on them with His breath
Glory blent of life and death;
Loosing on the scented breeze
Exquisite futilities.

Ah! what glints of laughter lurk
At so heavenly handiwork
Round His mouth and in His eyes
I but mistily surmise;
Or the buzz about His head
As the souls of beetles dead,
Flying back into His hand,
Chant, "Oh! to that glimmering land
We would fain go forth anew,
Kindred of the transient dew;

For immortal Beauty's sake
Mortal habitation make;
And, for wages, sip again
Honey from the lips of pain."

Therefore God the Artist laughed
As He plied His handicraft;
Toiled all night to speed by day
Travellers on the Pilgrims' Way.
Such His labour's urgent zest
Not an hour had He for rest.
"So," I said, "it is not fair
To disturb Him with my prayer;
And tonight I go to bed,
Sins unpardoned, prayers unsaid,
Pondering, till my light is spent,
What old Egypt's scarab meant.

Madanapalle, India.

BITTER AND SWEET

BITTER aloes give a flower—
Pendant bells, waxen white.
Here the honeybirds have dower
Of the honeybird's delight.

Black beneath from beak to tip
Of a joyous jerking tail,
Yellow necked, with yellow wing,
On the aloe stem they swing,
Sip, and cheep, and sip, and sail
Out and back, cheep and sip,
Till the eye of one who sees
Glimpses Beauty's mysteries;
And the joy of wing and leaf,
Swinging spray and waxen bell,
Through the thrilling heart-strings tell
Tears have other springs than grief.

Now they scan the bells with ear
Sideways set as if to hear
Honey-music's crystal strains
Echoed from the earth's deep veins;
Singing, crystal beat by beat,
Through the heart of all that lives;
Ringing through the swinging sweet
Flower the bitter aloe gives.

Madanapalle, India.

A MERWOMAN

Off the south coast of Japan

WHEN with snapped rudder-chain we rolled
Helplessly, and the masthead signal told
" Ship uncontrolled,"
They saw not what I saw, by love made wise,—
Lo, the dark deep had guardian eyes;
Yea, all the wonder of her soul's great seas
Looked at me through two brown anemones
That floated by,—
So I
Bore a brave heart at ease.

A FLOWER-OFFERING

MADE BY THE EMPRESS KOMIO OF JAPAN
TO ALL THE BUDDHAS

A paraphrase of her own poem on the occasion, about the beginning of the eighth century

FLOWERS for the Lord.—Ah! wherefore shed
Defilement from these mortal hands,
Or to the living give the dead?
Here in the windy meadow-lands
I offer these ungathered flowers
To Buddhas whom the past set free,
To Buddhas of the present hours,
Wild flowers to Buddhas yet to be.

MYOPIA

" LORD CHRIST receive my soul!" he cried,
And calmly died,
Looking to lift his eyes
In Paradise
Towards his adored
Ascended Lord,
And with swift fingers through a wiry warp
Weave praises on a harp.
Then, after some soft dreaming space,
He saw a baby face
Lit with ecstatic joy,
And the plump, sea-blue body of a boy
Who swung to suit
The wonderful shrill madness of his flute,
While round him dancing girls their anklets
  rang,
And "Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!" circling
  sang.

"Away, O heathen thing!" the dead man
cried,
"I seek a piercéd side,
Forehead thorn-crowned,
And great sad searching eyes.
This, only this, my longing satisfies."

Whereat the flute's glad sound
Sank to a sob of sweet compassionate wind
That murmured, "Blind, O blind!"

THE POET REFUSES TO PART WITH HIS YOUTH

No, Youth! we have no need to part
Although the years pile up behind;
Rather we gage to keep a heart
Responsive, and resilient mind.

For this I bound you close to truth;
Smiled at your hungers and your rage,
Deeming that sober age-in-youth
Would round to happy youth-in-age.

Time can no disenchantment bring
To those whose vision passes time;
But yield more vast adventuring
In deeper ocean, richer clime:

Yea, for the blood's lost gusty whims
Give steady sight of lofty goal;

And, for the fever of the limbs,
The strong clear passion of the soul.

A SONG OF STILLNESS

STAND still, my Soul! and see
Salvation from the Lord.
Chariots and men let be.
Oblivion's wave be poured
On all pursuing thee,
That up from Egypt roared
Deafness on what may be
Only in stillness heard.

Ocean and earth give up
To men who grasp and hoard.
Pharaoh his fate let fill.
Ours, Soul! the standing still
At the revealing word.
For us—enough a cup
Empty for what is poured
From fruit of one tall tree
With food and water stored.

This, and a space of time
Sweet with the grace of rhyme.

Still, still, my Soul! Oh see
About our quiet feet
The squirrel strangely stirred
To mute companionship,
And overhead the fleet
Arcana of the bird
Passing from lip to lip
Divine discovery.
These; and after dark,
(When frogs, rain-drunken, croak)
The fireflies' throbbing spark—
Heart of the yearning night
Breaking in beats of light;
Flashes of fairy fire
A thousand hammers smite,
Shaping one will entire
With simultaneous stroke.

Still, Soul! Oh very still,
Lest we escape the thrill
Of utmost mystery
That opened eyes may greet—
Celestial splendours curled

In this most poignant-sweet
God-blossom of a world,
That wake, with ancient smart,
Nostalgia of the heart,
Home-hunger of the will.

Oh! that disclosure come
To stilled and crystal sight,
Let all our mouths be dumb;
Earthward our eyes be bent
In holy sacrament,
Finding in dew-damp sod
Body and blood of God.

Lo! (signal to the wise)
Now from our earth arise,
Moulded of sky and clay,
The pillared fire by night,
The pillar of cloud by day,
That cry—"No promised land
Lies far, but here at hand;
Here, where ye, dreaming, drew
To break your day's duress;
And all the ways hereto
Are ways of quietness."

Madanapalle, India.

A HYMN TO BENEFICENT BEAUTY

THAT thing which I have left undone,
Or, done, has failed what thou hast willed,
Forgive, O Beauty!—as the sun
Forgives the flower that he has killed.
And, more, forgive my sceptic laugh
That I should bow in songless shame
To thee—since thou must shoulder half
The blame (if there is aught to blame);
For here, within your pulse's reach,
Where Venus apes your secret eye,
Great silence is the seemliest speech.
We shall have singing by and by.

I know that on a hidden vine
Hangs, for the gathering, song's full fruit.
Oh! lips aglow with present wine
Have little breath to fill a flute!
Perhaps a day will come when I
(While thundering echoes round me roll)

Shall raise your ringing glories high
And clash them from the towering soul.

Meanwhile, to hear your whisper float
When dayspring shakes the sleeping trees;
At noon to watch your gilded boat
Flash through the spume of sunny seas,
Sweet is; and sweet, with shadows blent,
To taste your deep and silent bliss,
Your thrill from far aloofness sent
Along the moonbeam's holy kiss,
When you at sleeptime on my head
Empty the jasmine's perfume-jars,
And draw at midnight round my bed
The sequin-coverlet of stars.

So fastened are my foolish eyes,
O Beauty! on your glamourous ways,
I have not leisure to grow wise
And old enough to sing your praise.

A HYMN TO DESTRUCTIVE BEAUTY

DEIRDRE and Helen—names
They gave you passing by.
Emain and Troy in flames
Your answer to their sigh.
O hand to which ours have flown,
Beggars for rest and meat!
You sow, where we have sown,
Fierce poppies through our wheat,
Smiting through dull content
Destructive beauty's shine;
Torch-trailing foxes sent
Through the fields of the philistine.

Deirdre and Helen! we
Who loved you long ago,
Still as felicity
Count your most shattering blow,
Knowing that till the bread
Be broke, the wine be spilled,

Love's feast cannot be spread,
Life's utmost be fulfilled;
Else were our dreaming vain,
Robbed of the end whereto
Wrestles the heart and brain,—
Lost, to be lost in you.

Deirdre and Helen! take
What name, what shape you please;
But, for your lovers' sake,
Grant us no deadening ease
With some poor perfect gift
Staling and swiftly spent;
Rather our vision lift
Through high bewilderment
Unto a purer pride,
Whether our singing give
Sorrow because you died,
Laughter that still you live.

INSTALLATION ODE

For the placing of the death-mask of Francis Thompson in the home of Yoné Noguchi in Japan

I

BEHOLD his face !—
"This ? No ! His living face,
Sworn to some deep allegiance with the dust,
Made pact with Death,
And signed away his lyrical breath
For some dark boon beyond our moth and rust,
Dashing our dream that he so greatly thus
Sang but for us.

Clay unto clay,
Too soon he went the dreadful human way.
Those eyes grew dim

That shone with the flying glory of seraphim
On heavenly embassage. That aeolian frame
Made vocal by every wind of song, became
A thing of horror to shrink from, to hustle away
Clay under clay!

From the mouth of the worm,
From the worm's unappeasable mouth
What art of man had power to hold him fast
When dry-lipped Death, in his bacchic fever-storm,
With our singer's life had stanched his drouth,
And his drainéd vessel upon the ground had cast,
Smearing mortality's ultimate disgrace
On his cold, blind, songless face?"

II

O ye of little faith!
How could he suffer silence and eclipse
Who took from off the Muse's lips
No reedy echo of a blasted wraith,
But song's immortal secret. Starry-willed,
He from the blare and clash of life distilled

Celestial music, throwing back to heaven
Heaven's voice with Earth's own sister-music
filled,
Stretching the rapture of his hymn
From snowflake unto seraphim.

Lo, past the 'Lampads seven'
He has winged his flight
In music, incense and light,
Carrying rumour to the flaming Throne,
Of Man Promethean grown,
Who on the hearth of Earth blows up a fire
Stolen from clay, transmuted from desire,
Which yet shall burn with fragrance of our sod
Within the House of God.

He has ascended to his natal place
Who for a season unto Earth was lent,
And unto us has sent
A comforter:—Behold his face!
Life's figurehead backed by invisible sails
Filled with what adventuring gales
On seas beyond our cramped horizon's ring;
An open book
For unborn legions dimly gathering,
Where those who wisely look

(Yea, even as he in one small grass-leaf's
blood
Found wisdom's brimming flood)
May read in script no passing years can dim
The very meaning of him.

III

O ye who in the presence of the pall
Chant gloomy psalms of life's distress,
Wailing that nearer fruit is nearer fall,
How close is ripe to rottenness,
Counting your house no more than wood and
stone,
Yourselves none other than your flesh and
bone!
Raise now instead a welcoming strain,
For lo! the face you lost has come again
Purged of corruption's stain.
Well have your hearts and his bereavéd song
Cried out against the silence of the grave
And slow time's lapsing wave.
Before the long
Deep genuflection of his stoléd word
Death dare not pass unheard
Love's cry for sight.—Behold, behold his face

Reborn of earth and art's transfiguring flame,
The same, yet not the same,
Fixed in the flux of Time whose hand can trace
No slow decay on this our memory's norm;
For ere Corruption drove his shattering plough
O'er cheek and brow,
Song's wordless clay-born sister-craft
Full in the face of old Oblivion laughed,
And snatched this fadeless relic of his form
From the mouth of the worm!

IV

Now let hot grief take faith's cool healing kiss,
Love's whisper tell
How the dim Gardener crushed his leaf to smell
His own involvéd sweetness. Count not this
But a cicatrix on the wound of life,
O ye bereaved! Lift up your eyes and see
No puny changeling for the unchilded wife,
But, more than perishing flesh, the visible he,
The hieroglyph of the soul's mystery.

Here of his many faces behold the last,
The sum, the summit; life's whole meaning
cast

Into one look all looks had flickered toward;
One coin compounded of his squandered hoard;
One silence built on song's high equipoise.

Oh! many fluctuant feet of griefs and joys,
Railing each other down
With April-alternating smile and frown,
Danced through his heart in mutual mockery,
Till their gyration drew each other in,
And at the pinnacle of ecstasy
Fused them to utter quietness.... Look you now,
Death on his wheel has whirled the rainbowed gauds
Our singer cast in prodigal delight
On his song's shoulders; and upon his brow
Lays their intervolvéd white
For ermined vestment, since life's Master nods
Knighthood on song's new virgin paladin.

V

Now we, to the sound of the heart's drum and fife,
Though secretly our eyes be sweetly wet,

Here in the front of his closed house of life
His hatchment proudly set;
Proudly, yet not in vainly swelling pride,
But with deep humbleness, as his, clear-eyed,
That held his music but an answering strain
When the Celestial Fiddler drew His bow
In earshot of the Soul's taut tympanum,
And sands of speech, dead scattered else and
dumb,
Sprang to the pattern-dance of unseen strings
With stars and leaves and waves and wings.

VI

Come now within the presence, feet unshod,
Where art and song, child-laughter, friendship
free,
Make for our treasure fit reliquary.
Blow each upon your burning incense rod
Till it smoke forth, snaky as Maenad's hair
Curled with a wind that blows its old despair
To some strange solace touched with heavenly
thrill.
Draw near and look your fill.
Look where, no more of casual ardours born,
Freed from life's fear-haunted morn

And age's undesirous hands and feet,
Out of the nuptials of cool clay and clay
Song's Minerva springs complete,
Born the Jupiterian way.

VII

Last, ere with forehead thrice upon the ground
We take our leave with reverence profound,
Mark you that mouth's sweet-lippéd line,
Shut as if tasting the new-trodden wine
Of choicest vintages of speech
From high-trailed branches past life's longest reach,
Ungathered save by those whose feet have made
Death's escalade,
Smacking of richer root and sweeter sun
Than grapes of Earth had done.
. . Beneath that brow behold those fallen lids
Cured of our darkness by what magic touch?
Oh! we do wonder much
What stellar maze their franchised vision thrids;
How takes each star
The 'abashless inquisition' of those eyes

That even in life's winkered glance
Caught the cosmic ordonnance,
And now doth find
High confirmation and the amplitude
Of the trajectory of his arrowy mind.
Yea, for his faith's reward,
Stands he as Moses stood
Ablink at the stripped splendour of the Lord,
But with more subtle sight
Nearer the flame doth draw,
And on a holier Sinai's loftier height
Receives the tables of a deeper Law!

NOTES

NOTES

Page 3: FRANCIS SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON, M.A., one of Ireland's best-known publicists, was arrested and shot during the first confusion of the rebellion in Dublin in April, 1916, by an officer who was afterwards found by a courtmartial to be insane. When arrested, Mr. Skeffington was engaged in an endeavour to restrain the populace from disorder, an action in keeping with his earnest and varied humanitarianism, on some sides of which the author was closely associated with him for several years. He was pure-hearted and fearless, and his intellectual honesty had passed into a proverb in his lifetime. His death, on the false assumption that he was concerned in an armed uprising, when, in fact, he was an opponent of warfare in any form save reasonable argument, has been lifted above its tragic irony, and become a sacrifice for the future peace of the world.

Page 8: Brigid, the Celtic Goddess of Poetry, was the daughter of the supreme God of Light, Dagda. She became the wife of Bress, the King of the Powers of Darkness, and later his enemy. These relationships are symbolical of the source of poetry in illumination, its necessity to consort for its expression with the dark realm of life, and its protest against that realm. The name Brigid is variously derived, but the meaning most beloved of the poets is Bright Arrow, for is not Poetry the singing Shaft from the Bow of the Lord?

Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of Literature, Arts and Knowledge, is pictured sitting on lotuses playing a sitar.

Page 44: Tamas and Sat are the Vedantic equivalents of matter and spirit.

The koel is an Indian bird with the note of the blackbird and the habits of the cuckoo.

NOTES

Page 52: The Banyan continues its life by dropping slender vertical branches which reach the ground and take root. In South India the foliage remains on the tree all year. When the new season comes it pushes the past year's leaves off, producing the simultaneous sight of autumn and spring.

Page 60: The vina is an Indian wire-stringed musical instrument which rests on the ground on two-gourds and is plucked with the naked fingers.

Pages 62 to 72: The Indian Paraphrases are efforts to reproduce the *spirit* of the originals. Line for line translation from the highly inflected Indian languages is impossible. The transliterations save one were made for me by Mr. V. R. Karandikar, B.A., from whom I learned the cadences that I have tried to echo.

Mr. C. S. Barathi is a well-known Tamil poet, who lived in political exile in the French province of Pondicherry, a few miles south of Madras, in company with Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, a writer of beautiful English poetry suffused with the Hellenic spirit. Mr. Barathi died in 1921.

The Rani Mirabai was a Rajput Queen whose saintly life has passed into the Indian classics of story. Her life has been dramatised by the author in "The King's Wife". Her songs are known everywhere in India. She was a devout follower of the Vaishnavite worship which is less metaphysical and more devotional than other forms of Indian religion.

I have written in "The Renaissance in India" of the other poets whom I have paraphrased, as members of a "long line of philosopher-poets to whom their philosophy was so much a thing of life, so exalted by the joy of discovery and experience, so vitalised by emotion, that it was the most natural thing in the world for them to express in poetry the thoughts that to them were charged with feeling, and the feelings that to them were made coherent by thought".

Page 65: Ishwara is the supreme Spirit.

Page 67: Collirium is a dark powder used by Indian women for beautifying and healing the eyes.

NOTES

Nala is an epic hero about whose love-story many songs have been sung. The story of Nala and Damayanti is one of the classics of the Indian stage.

Page 89: The Taj Mahal at Agra in the North of India was built by the Mogul Emperor, Shah Jahan, in memory of his wife, Mumtaj Mahal. It was begun in 1630. Twenty thousand workmen were employed and took about twenty years to complete it. The building is probably the most beautiful in the world. The tomb of the Empress is under the centre of the whispering dome, the Taj having been intended by Shah Jahan for it alone. It was his intention to build a tomb for himself on the opposite side of the river Jamuna; but the vicissitudes of empire made this impossible, and his body was ultimately placed alongside that of his queen. The second tomb under the dome is out of architectural balance, but moves the heart with a sense of an inner symmetry in the poetical fate of the creator of such beauty finding the resting-place of his body beside the dust of her he had so devotedly loved, and in the heart of the amazing thing of beauty that he had caused to be reared for her sake.

Page 105: Surya is the Hindu Sun-God. Gita is the samskrit for songs.

Page 107: Kathleen-ni-Houlihan (Kathleen daughter of sorrow) was the name given to Ireland in the days when it was a penal offence, under the law of the foreign invader, for an Irish poet to sing the praises of his country.

Page 129: Exodus, XIV, 13.

Page 134: Deirdre is the Helen of Irish legend, Emain the Irish Troy. 'Torch-trailing foxes'—Judges, XV, 4, 5.

APPRECIATIONS

THE QUEST

"Rarely is it the fortune of the reviewer to meet with verse of such distinction."—*New Ireland Review.*

"An imagination filled with haunting and refreshing images."—*Black and White.*

"Wealth of imagery and loftiness of diction give it no small claim to rank beside many of the finest conceptions of poetic genius."—*The Peasant.*

THE BELL-BRANCH

"Marked by a polished simplicity."—*Times.*

"Mr. Cousins . . . has gradually perfected a method of self-expression, and his verse, exquisitely fashioned, delights with its individual note."—*Northern Whig.*

"Artistically Mr. Cousins can only be put below the two leaders of his movement; he has the calm intensity, the subtle strangeness of simplicity, which seems to be as easy as breathing to an Irish Poet."—*The Nation, London.*

THE AWAKENING

"One of the most beautiful little books I have ever seen—Mr. Cousins has attained a unique mastery over the sonnet."—*Irish News.*

ETAIN THE BELOVED

"One might compare it with 'Tiresias,' the poem in which Swinburne transfigured the dream of Italian liberty. It is poetry of a high quality."—*The Star.*

"Though not essentially a nature poet, he seems more truly to have got at the heart of things in the life of woodland and stream than any of his Irish contemporaries. . . . The piece leaves an impression of intense pleasure."—*Weekly Irish Times.*

APPRECIATIONS

"It is a poem worthy of the name, passionate, musical and wise. It is the work of a man who thinks, and who sets others thinking."—*The Times Literary Supplement.*

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED

"At least three of these poems have a great beauty—a beauty both of word and spirit, where artistry and vision are as one."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"These poems, so varied in subject and metre, are full of beautiful things."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"Rare and distinguished work which will be treasured by all who love beauty . . . an entirely original power of expression both in language and rhythm."—*The Observer, London.*

"It is the spiritual rather than the material that inspires him . . . he is the poet of hope and faith and love—never of despair . . . the thinker, the poet, the man of courage who draws sustenance, not poison, out of the mystery of the universe."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"Many an English poet would willingly sacrifice a page or two of his consummate verse if he might but catch the charm of such a lullaby as this . . ."—*The Times.*

"The latest poetical utterance of Ireland (1915) is a cry of complete realisation. It has remained for Mr. Cousins, more sensitive and complex than his compatriots, to hear the call of his age more consciously than they; and it is left to him in grace and courage to declare it." *Studies in Contemporary Poets,* by Mary C. Sturgeon (Harrap), Chapter on "An Irish Group".

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